1: Honigman E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

willingly. Any reluctance to separate or any assistance furnished by a girl's partner indicate 839
unwillingness or at least unreadiness for intercourse.

Homosexuality can be divided into two types, overt homosexuality and behavior which 838
seems indicative of repressed or inhibited homosexual tendencies. The former behavior, although socially condemned, nevertheless occurs secretly, generally in the form of mutual masturbation. Informants reported overt homosexuality to occur in both sexes following puberty and to be largely a consequence of sexual frustration. "No girl, can't catch," Nitla explained, "he stuck for girl, some man do that. Girl, can't catch a man, do that, bother girl." Apart from social disapproval if discovered, the behavior is not associated with any specific sanctions.

Overt homosexual tendencies are often publicly demonstrated between intoxicated men. Several such instances were observed. When Richard Day, Edward Prince, and the latter's wife were drinking in the ethnographer's tent, Richard, after gesturing toward Edward's penis, began to simulate masturbation of the latter. This was really frottage, as Edward was fully clothed and the hand did not rest directly on the genitals but in their vicinity. On another occasion Old Man was drinking and, turning to Richard Day, spoke of how he had teased and wrestled with the latter when Richard was a small boy. He began to speak of men "fooling" with boys the way they "fool" with women. He gestured playfully toward Richard's genitals and referred to the youth's "little worm." At a later party Old Man told his son-in-law, Harry Lang, to give Donald Sam a cup of brew. Harry put his arms around the boy and drew the latter to his knee. He called Donald, "My little sweetheart." Donald bore this patiently but Old Man cried: "Shame, mustn't do that."

Behavior suggesting hidden homosexual impulses is revealed by unmarried adolescents of both sexes. It is chiefly manifested in embracing, wrestling, and by a youth playfully coming up behind another young man and pressing his body close to the latter. Sometimes a swift coital-like rhythm is manifested in these embraces. On one occasion Flower Joe was observed playfully simulating the strumming of a guitar on her cousin's, Irene Wiley's, breast. Irene showed no reaction.

No particular value is associated with male continence. Carefully regulated sexual be- 831
havior (that is, the avoidance of excess) may aid a man to live long and bring "good luck, [117]
but some sexual experience is nevertheless regarded as desirable. Continence may actually be as dangerous as excessive sexuality if it leads to "worry about girl." In such cases a man may "Lose his brains, go crazy." Therefore the advice is: "Better get married."

The idea of a woman remaining a lifelong virgin was regarded as amusing. The informant rejected this notion as an impossibility and stated that if a woman of thirty, who had never been sexually initiated, were to see a man, "She grab him. She sleep right there. Mire worse than dog." However the informant thought it very unlikely that young men would ever permit a woman to get that far into life without some sexual experience.

Recreation

No one who has learned to know the Kaska people can doubt their great love for recreation or "fun." Necessarily reduced to a minimum during the family's isolation in winter, 52 517
recreational patterns flourish during the summer in Lower Post. The formal amusements

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

52 are: drinking parties; participation in festivals, particularly the potlatch; music; dancing,
●517 and gambling. The less important informal recreational patterns, which we will discuss first, include: idling, conversation, humor, and visiting.

517 *Informal.* Idling is a feature not only of the summer period in Lower Post, when families may be seen gathered in the shade of the mission buildings or the traders' stores, but is also the pattern of the long winter evenings after the family has finished supper. Rarely are individuals seen loafing alone, the tendency always being for a man to seek company when he has free time available. People from more than a single family, when loafing in a group, tend to separate according to age and sex; the women and children gathering by themselves, the men lolling a short distance away. In such groups people often sit with their backs to each other with no thought of discourtesy. Generally the space separating individuals is not great; children cluster near the mother and the women, as well as men, sit in close proximity. In the evening idling in the center of town is often enlivened by the rough-housing and wrestling of boys and unmarried young men and girls. In winter it is sometimes accompanied by making figures out of a folded handkerchief or pulling string figures.

A special form of idling occurs when the community gathers on the river bank in Lower Post to watch the arrival of the boat from Dease Lake with freight and passengers from Telegraph Creek and Wrangell, Alaska. The boat is often heard when it is still out of sight, around the tongue of land dividing the Liard and Dease Rivers. News of its approach circulates quickly and soon the bank is lined with people watching the slow approach of the vessel as it ascends the river (Plate 11, c). The crowd is quiet but eager, these occasions marking one of the high spots of the summer stay in the post. However, the introduction of the Alaska Highway has probably deprived the event of much of its old time emotional appeal. Now families often idle in front of the restaurant facing the Highway, where the arrival and departure of trucks may be silently studied. It was in this setting that the ethnographer was reintroduced to his Indian friends upon his return to Lower Post in June 1947.

521 In the family as well as in other groups there is a relatively low value on conversation. While in American society interpersonal situations are mainly sustained by conversation, and any sign of its lagging is often a signal for the group to disperse, in the Indian community verbalized social interaction is of only incidental significance. A group is organized on the basis of the presence of its members. Thus Kaska social life is not characterized by loquacity. Even during visiting, conversation is intermittent, commonplace, and slight. Gossip, as already pointed out, is never expressed in large groups but is confined to conversations that include no more than two or three well acquainted individuals.

522 Kaska humor is neither richly developed nor subtle in its construction. The society boasts no *raconteurs* noted for their ability to tell a series of funny stories nor is there a large stock of jokes. Nevertheless, the people are always ready to laugh and a person like Old Man, who does not confine "talking fun" to drinking situations, enjoys considerable popularity.

Several functions of humor may be noted. A joke is often used to make light of a difficult situation, either one facing the humorist or a person present in his audience. Several examples may be given. When Nitla's wife sought to leave her husband in preference for the latter's brother, Nitla continued to live with the couple. The situation provoked Old Man

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is primarily determined by practical and immediate considerations—their value to ego's self-sufficiency or their threat to his efficient functioning.

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The strongly developed practical interest in adaptation leads the Indian to neglect beauty and to be unresponsive to perfectionism as an end in itself—that is, above and beyond the degree required for utility. Embroidery on moccasins, mittens, and gloves is reduced to a minimum or often lacking. Only one or two women enjoy a reputation for fancy sewing, although many more are acknowledged as skilled, practical dressmakers. Ours are particularly crude and unfinished. Experiments made to deduce the emotional aspects of cultural products in connection with clothing and housing consistently revealed qualities of simplicity and imperfection. Mittens, moccasins, and children's underwear, without being fitted to the wearer's dimensions, are cut with a general impression of size, allowing a little extra so that the final product is always somewhat larger than necessary. The style is baggy, the garment only crudely shaped to the body. Analysis of several log cabins reveals a striking lack of perfectionism. In one cabin some roof poles are partly hewed while many are not hewed at all. Where the logs join at the corners they are often not all sawed off to equal length. Another cabin is only half floored. The interiors of most houses are not painted or otherwise finished. Such housing style permits the inference that the people's primary concern is with utility, adequacy of a structure being defined primarily in terms of the building's use for the obvious function of weather protection. Thus we find walls lined with cardboard to keep out drafts, and more chinking for more prevalent than the more finished-looking chinking with pole chinks which many white men use. It may be pointed out, however, that the increasing use of mill sawed lumber, which is easier to manipulate than logs, is resulting in larger, and in some cases, more finished looking cabins. While the neglect of nonfunctional aesthetic production may be partly determined by the fact that Kaska society has not been able to develop leisure time patterns of self-expression, any total picture of this neglect must also take into consideration the dominant motivation toward utility. It is consistent with configurational thinking that such personality values should be developed in members of a society forced to live under rigorous environmental conditions, where energy has to be largely confined to adaptation.

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Attitudes condemning waste may be partly ascribed to utilitarian considerations. Food leftovers, instead of being discarded or fed to dogs, are preserved for future meals. At the feast potlatch, food remains returned by the servers were scraped from dishes and, after being mixed with the contents of the cooking pots, were served again. Similar economy is revealed toward the possessions of the dead. Destruction of death goods is minimal; only worn or soiled clothes are burned. Valuable goods (like a sleeping robe) are freed from contagion by washing or by allowing a period of time to dissolve the association between object and deceased owner.

Social sanctions supporting utilitarian considerations are not lacking. Both the ideal men and women are skilled. Young men are quickly proud of their technological achievements and older men of their special technical abilities. A skilful individual is selected for favorable comment and is also favored by a prospective parent-in-law, while an unskilful youth has his behavior deplored. More important than the social recognition of these attributes is the fact that practical skills and ingenuity greatly lighten the individual's adaptive problems, guarantee him comfort, and contribute to survival.

B

D

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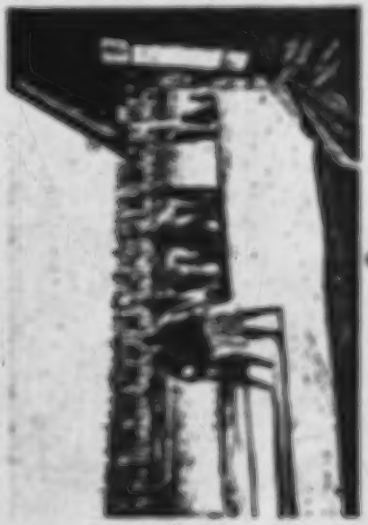

C

[END PLATE 11]

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Tahltan
Frances Lake
Upper Liard

Red appealed as the favorite color for painting skin clothing. It was applied around the neck as well as along the front of the garment, always in straight, vertical lines. Porcupine-quill embroidery adorned coats, dresses, and mittens. Men wore arm garters of painted quills, a woman prided herself on being able to supply her husband with such "high-toned" ornaments. 291 531 [301]

Headdresses included porcupine-quill and tanned-skin headbands, the latter embroidered with quills, and headkerchiefs of tanned skin embroidered with quillwork. Women used the kerchiefs while men wore the headbands. Necklaces and wristlets could not be recalled. At about the age of seven the like-sexed parent pierced a child's nasal septum with a bone awl. In the hole the individual carried a bone plug but never a ring. Childhood also marked the time when a mother perforated her daughter's ears. In these holes the girl inserted bone ornaments carved by men. Helix ear plugs as well as face and chin labrets remained unknown. Only a woman painted her face and the use of reindeer bone marrow for hair dressing likewise remained restricted to her sex. Grouard has described the appearance of women who came to Fort Liard in 1867 from the vicinity of Fort Halkett. They were attired in moose-skin (*peau d'orignaux*) garments decorated "with a kind of pommade made of goat's grease and vermillion paint with which they had daubed their cheeks, nose, and chin." When the priest told them to stop painting their faces, because the custom displeased both God and himself, they immediately began to remove the designs.* With a needle and length of sinew line young people of both sexes tattooed the body. Generally a companion who possessed special skill in this technique performed the initial operation. The hair normally remained uncut. Women wore braids hanging down over the back. Fish skeletons found no place as hair combing devices, the informant asserting that the people used a comb carved from birch. Facial hair was extracted by plucking but no attempt was made to get rid of pubic or armpit hair. 291 301 304 302

Frances Lake Kaska. The aboriginal moccasin pattern of the Tutcotena featured the pointed toe with the seam running lengthwise until it joined the tongue. Pike reports seeing women who wore "a large brass ring through the nose" near Frances Lake.* 291 301 304

RECREATION

Upper Liard Kaska. Sometimes in the evening when chores were done and everyone had eaten, the people played. The summer and winter gatherings around a fish lake provided opportunities for recreation but no great cooperation was required for a man to amuse himself by carving small animal images from wood or outlining figures in red paint on rocks and trees. In winter children enjoyed drawing huge scrawling designs in 517

* Grouard, *Souvenirs de mes missions aux Esquimaux dans l'Athabaska Mackenzie* (n. d.), 103.

* Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 138. Field reports clothing of caribou skin as well as moose calf skin among the Pelly River Indians. These materials were sometimes "tanned with the hair on, sometimes worn with the hair inside the garment, sometimes with the hair out. Some of the more stylish use beaver for coats and hats and mitts, also in trimming garments. They use rabbit skin cut in strips and braided for blankets, also the skins of squirrels and groundhog." Field, *Unpublished manuscript* (1912), 6.

6: Honigmann K-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

517 the smooth snow of a frozen lake. Games, feasts, and potlatches involved larger scale social interaction.

534 The tambourine drum furnished the standard musical instrument. The best toned drumheads came from the raw skin of a young moose, caribou skin being inferior because it split too easily. The rawhide was spanned across one side of a circular wooden rim, babiche lines running from the edges of the skin to tie underneath the cover. These converging lines also made a useful handle to hold the instrument. The size of drums varied but a potlatch instrument sometimes attained three feet in diameter. To tighten the drumhead a player carefully heated it over a fire. Although the Upper Liard Indians [534] made rattles for children, such instruments were not regarded as musical instruments. Whistles, carved from willow, also constituted toys.[23]

533 Repetitious, wordless chants that expressed feeling and amused or entertained listeners shared a place with true songs containing words. The repertory included potlatch songs, gambling songs for stick games, love songs to serenade a sweetheart, mourning songs, and magical war chants. A shaman sang his own song while curing, and so did a man working with a maul.

535 The Upper Liard Indians did not dance in a circle. Rather people ranged themselves in a row and, with the arms partly raised but not directly participating in the movement, 293 rocked the body up and down while keeping time with the feet.[24] Potlatch dancers painted their faces grotesquely and costumed themselves in sheep and wolf skins, half-finished coats, absurd headgear, and sheep horns—all provoking considerable amusement for the spectators. Wolf's-head masks might be worn by members of that moiety.

526 The people liked to engage in contests of strength and skill, including throwing, arrow shooting, wrestling, and racing. Adults and children played with balls made from a mass of skin sewn into a tanned-skin container. Target shooting with a bow demanded a small stick thrust in the ground as a target. In one winter sport boys threw sticks in the snow trying to make them skip like flat stones thrown across the surface of water. Young men frequently competed to see who by using his hands alone could break the hindquarter bone of a beaver. Occasionally a girl also joined the competition. The secret of breaking a beaver bone, according to an informant, lay in twisting it with great force [524] rather than trying to break it in half. Riddles are said to have been told for amusement but none could be obtained.[25] Wrestling enjoyed wide popularity among young men but was specifically prohibited between two brothers-in-law. Young boys ran foot races on the snow of a frozen lake. Canoe races could not be recalled but an informant believed

[23] A Kaska informant knew the Tlingit to possess plank drums and to use rattles in dancing. According to Drucker, the Tlingit (including the Chilkat) used single-head tambourine, suspended wooden, and plank drums. Drucker, *Culture Element Distributions: XXVI, Northwest Coast* (1950), 197–198.

[24] Among the Tlingit "while dancing, the participants stand close together and scarcely move out of their tracks. . . . The dancing really consists of rhythmic movements of the hands, arms, head and entire body above the waist. . . Time is measured by the beat of the drum. . . ." Men and women danced, painting the face with red or black pigments and also using masks. Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 144.

[25] "It is interesting to note the presence of riddles among the Tahltan, a feature that has not often been reported for North American Indian tribes." Teit, *On Tahltan (Athabaskan) Work* (1912), 486.